

The Serse Trust Annual Activity Report for 2024

Chairman: Christopher Silvester

The Serse Trust was formed on 18th December 2012. It obtained HMRC approval on 1st June 2013 [Ref. no. EW00385] and full registered charitable status on 26 September 2013 [No. 1153972].

The trustees are Christopher Silvester (chairman), whose professional background is in journalism and PR; Edward Houghton, whose professional background is in the law; and Dr Alan King, a retired consultant anaesthetist and doyen of the London Handel scene.

The operations board consists of Christopher Silvester (chairman); John Allen (treasurer); Mark Payne; Dr Alan King; and Edward Houghton, with the support of Leo Duarte and Ana Waszak.

The Trust was formed to support Ensemble Serse but later switched to supporting the newly formed Opera Settecento, which seeks to revive 18th-century opera seria and other unjustifiably neglected works of the baroque. It also has a mission to promote young and emerging talent, both vocal and instrumental.

The principal vehicle is Opera Settecento, of which Leo Duarte is the Artistic Director. He has transitioned from one of Europe's top baroque oboists to also embrace a career in conducting period performance groups like Opera Settecento and others. In Summer 2022 he made his successful major conducting debut with English Touring Opera and Handel's *Agrippina*.

Performances in 2024 included the following:

January 2024	Rezonanzen Festival Vienna / 'The Planets - Uranus'
June 2024	Halle Handel Festival / <i>Titus L'Empereur</i> HWV A5 (two performances)
October 2024	London Handel Festival / <i>Jane Barbier - the Shrew'd Syren</i> (recital with Ciara Hendrick)
November 2024	Handel Friends / Handel Duets (recital with Hilary Cronin and Francis Gush)

The Trust income was £89,633 for the year, compared to £9,174 in 2023.

Personal donations were significantly down compared to 2022 with just two donors, and we were very grateful for another significant donation from the Behrens Foundation via Stephen Cockburn, and for the donation received from the London Handel Society.

The Trust expenses were £105,030 for the year compared to £12,328 in 2023.

Very modest, but very well deserved, fees went to Anna Waszak for her amazing work as General Manager.

The shortfall of £15,397 in 2024 was funded from the £21,300 reserves brought forward from 2023, leaving £5,903 reserves carried forward to 2025.

Since the income was less than £10,000 in 2024, no independent review of the financial report is required.



John Allen
Treasurer